

Calendar Sat, Mar 10 Fri, Feb 23 Pick up your Bugle at PO lobby! Garrett Park Farmers Market, Penn Place/CSX Parking Lot, 10am-1pm Sat, Feb 24 Garrett Park Farmers Market, Penn GP Jams Coffeehouse, Town Hall, Place/CSX Parking Lot, 10am-1pm 7:30pm (winter hours Jan thru Mar) Sun, Mar 11 Art at Penn Place, Artist Reception: Thur, Mar 1 Neighbors Helping Neighbors Don Savage, Penn Place Gallery, Committee Meeting, Town 3-5pm Office,10am GPJams, Town Hall, 8pm Mon, Mar 12 Town Council Meeting, Town Hall, 7:30pm Sat. Mar 3 Garrett Park Farmers Market, Penn Place/CSX Parking Lot, 10am–1pm Tue, Mar 13 Lunch Bunch, Town Hall, 12:30pm Gives Collection, PO Lobby, 9am-Thur, Mar 15 GPJams, Town Hall, 8pm 12noon Fri, Mar 16 GP Film Society, "Denial," Town Art at Penn Place, Last day to view Hall, Dinner 7pm, Film 8pm the 2018 Garrett ParkYouth Art Show Sat, Mar 17 Garrett Park Farmers Market, Penn Sun, Mar 4 Art at Penn Place features artist, Don Place/CSX Parking Lot, 10am–1pm Savage, Mar 4-24 Happy St. Patrick's Day! Mon, Mar 5 Weekly yard waste collection begins Tue, Mar 6 Archives Committee Meeting, Town Tue, Mar 20 Arboretum Committee Meeting, Office, 7:30pm Town Office, 7pm Thur, Mar 8 **Historic Preservation Committee** Meeting, Town Office, 7:30pm

This Old Tree – In Conclusion

Another exciting and very long Town Council meeting! This one lasted until 11 p.m.—three and a half hours—with at least 22 people in the audience (almost all chairs were occupied). Some readers' eyes might glaze over as they read about what occupied most of the Council's time, so before we get into that, we'll first report on the evening's action items.

The February meeting is when the proposed annual town budget is introduced (to be voted upon in the following month). Town Manager Gene Swearingen and Mayor Benjamin noted that putting the budget together was more difficult than usual given the unknown impact of the new Federal tax law, as well as uncertainty over what will happen to the economy (if inflation rises, etc.). That said, the

expenditure side of the budget appears to make mostly small changes. But three important developments came out in the discussion among Council members.

First, Gene is retiring in early 2019, so this is the last budget he will work on. The Council will engage a search firm to help in the process of finding his replacement (hopefully by mid-year so the new person can work with Gene for a few months to learn the ropes).

Second, the budget proposes a cut in the town property tax rate. This is intended to help people offset the likely increased tax burden many residents will face on their Federal taxes (i.e., the cap on deductibility of state and local tax payments) as well as increased property taxes resulting from the new

Montgomery County property value assessments that will be phased in beginning this year.

Third, the budget proposal includes language for the Mayor to shift funds among sub-categories in the budget (so long as Council members are notified in advance). This measure is intended to permit more flexibility when some line items experience unexpected but necessary increases (e.g., unexpectedly large snow removal costs) while others are under budget. Without this flexibility, two months can go by before Council action enables the shift (as the budget adjustment is first proposed than voted on in the following month), delaying payment of bills. The downside is the possibility of degrading the role of the Council in budgeting (though the flexibility is limited to line items, not large budget categories). Expect further discussion of this when the Council meets in March to vote on the budget.

The other action item for the evening was a variance request (10810 Kenilworth). The existing house is being demolished and rebuilt. The new house will be in almost the same spot and meets the front set-back requirement. But there is another somewhat arcane set-back rule about maintaining an even façade along a street (i.e., a house must be set back by the average of the two houses on either side of it). In this case, the house is next to the town hall, which is much farther back than any of the houses on the street. The Council understood the unusual nature of the situation and granted the variance.

So much for the action items. They were dealt with in about an hour. What took up the rest of time? The answer is a discussion for the second month in a row about the proposed removal of a large tulip poplar tree on Clermont Avenue as part of the sidewalk reconstruction.

Recall that the Council agreed in January to ask several arborists for written opinions about the need to remove the tree. This resulted in a summary memo by the Mayor with five arborist reports (one of which was from an engineering firm that included a set of five possible sidewalk solutions). These materials were disseminated to the Council and to the residents on Clermont opposed to the tree removal (and were available to all attending the meeting). The reports were varied, but most expressed some concern about either the current health of the tree or its health after building the sidewalk. This packet of reports formed the basis of the two-and-a-half hour discussion, much of which was quite similar to that expressed at the January council meeting.

Appeals for saving the tree (from the same people who spoke in January) rested on aesthetic grounds (it's a beautiful tree and should be saved in a town that prides itself on being an arboretum). The position in favor of removing the tree came from

concerns that none of the suggested engineering alternatives really work. Either the health of the tree would be compromised or the result would be unacceptable slope and drainage issues.

The only real difference from the discussion in January was that several residents came to the meeting to speak up in favor of removing the tree, buttressing the concerns of the Council. Those opposed to removing the tree were not convinced, arguing that imaginative solutions should exist. As the discussion finally came to an end after everyone in the audience and Council who wanted to speak had their say, the Council remained convinced that a) there is a moral (and legal liability) need to worry about the possibility of the tree falling, and b) no acceptable engineering solutions exist. Your reporter concludes that after a total of about four hours of discussion spread across two Council meetings, the tree will be removed as planned.

Ed Lincoln, Bugle Reporter



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Did You Know?

At the height of the Cold War, during ten days in November 1983, tensions between the USSR and the United States were so high that a nuclear war almost started. For history buffs, you probably already know this. But the year before was also a time of great concern, especially for the residents of Garrett Park.

On Monday, May 3, 1982, the residents of the town voted in not only the first woman Mayor (Peggy Pratt) but also the resolution to declare the Town of Garrett Park a nuclear-free zone. This resolution bans transportation, storage, and the manufacture of nuclear weapons within its 123-acre boundary. It also established Garrett Park as the first nuclear free zone in the United States.

This was no small feat. The Citizens Association raised the idea after a resident, Gene McDowell, attended a presentation about the threat of a nuclear war. It was his idea to write an ordinance, and the officers of the Citizens Association backed the idea. There were some who thought the idea impractical but in a few short months the ordinance was drafted and the resolution was put forward for the May 1982 election. Following the Town's historic moment, other towns and cities (e.g., Takoma Park) across the Nation went on to make similar resolutions.

-Researched by Kacky Chantry, Archives and Marian Green, Historic Preservation



Green Tip of the Month

It's almost time for spring cleaning, but some cleaners are toxic.

Words like "biodegradable" or "nontoxic" have no legal definitions. Investigate products with the **Environmental Working Group's Healthy Cleaning Guide**

(<u>https://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners#.Wom946</u> 7tzIU)

Avoid cleaners containing **phosphates**. Phosphates cause algae blooms, robbing the water of oxygen, blocking sunlight, and ultimately killing aquatic life.

Minimize use of **bleaches**. The most common bleach is chlorine, which can create toxic compounds. Although less effective in cold-water temperatures, non-chlorine bleaches are gentler to clothes and the environment but require energy-intensive hot water.

Buy concentrates, why pay for water? -- Follow instructions. Use no more than the recommended amount.

(Submitted by Joanne Schmader with research from <u>Earthshare.org</u>)





Town Elections Call for Nominations



This year the Town is electing a mayor and two council members. Nominations will be solicited at an open meeting in the Town Hall on Wednesday, March 28, at 7:30pm. Since the Citizen's Association no longer wishes to hold this meeting, it is being facilitated by the Judges of Elections. Candidates must reside in the Town, be 18 years of age or older, and agree to run.

Can't make the meeting? Candidates can also be nominated by petition, signed by at least 10 Garrett Park registered voters and filed at least 21 days before the May 7 election. For 2018, this is April 16. The Candidate Petition can be found on the Town website under the "Government" tab, "Elections and Voter Registration" section.

Suzanne Grefsheim, Chief Election Judge



The *Garrett Bugle* is a newsletter publication by the Citizens Association of Garrett Park and published 10 times a year. Publication is supported by member dues. All residents of Garrett Park are members of the Citizens Association. Yearly dues (\$25 per family or \$15 per individual per address) can be sent to Citizens Association, Box 456, Garrett Park, MD 20896. Articles, ads and other content for the *Garrett Bugle* can be emailed to **GPBugle@googlegroups.com.***

Citizens Association Officers

Darshini Trivedi, President ~ Michael Lutkenhouse and Lesley Maloney, Vice-Presidents ~ Bridget Silverman, Treasurer ~ Sean Conlan, Secretary

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Ads and Distribution: Peggy Pratt (Box 158)

Calendar and Subscriptions: Joanne Schmader (Box 415) ~ Firstclass subscriptions cost \$15 (no bulk mail).

*Editor and staff reserve the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. Unsigned <u>Letters to the Editor</u> will not be printed.

Bugle Notes . . . Sweet and Sour

Garrett Parker Jessica Heath, whose Sri Lankan mother inspired her to cook Sri Lankan foods, is launching a cookbook project on *Kickstarter*.

Her recipes give both a Sri Lankan taste to

familiar foods and an introduction to Sri Lankan favorites. If you watch MasterChef USA, you might have seen Jessica on season 8. If you are interested in supporting Jessica's



project or obtaining an early version of her book, go to *ceylove.com* for more information.

The Montgomery County Master Gardener Spring Gardening Conference will take place this year on February 24. The daylong event is open to the public and offers multiple presentations by Master Gardeners, morning



snacks, a delicious bag lunch, door prizes, networking with other gardeners, answers to your gardening questions, handouts, and reference materials. See link https://extension.umd.edu//mg/locations/spring*miniconference*

Game Night with Silent Auction on February 24. All GPES Alumni and neighbors are invited to join this great event and support your local school! Check out the link, GPES PTA silent auction catalogue, to view the full listing of auction items and their details. This is our final major Rocky Fund fundraiser for the



year! http://www.gpespta.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/2018_Catalog.10140325.pdf

Town Manager Notes

Retirement. With very mixed emotions, I am announcing my retirement as the Town Manager in Garrett Park. By agreement with the Mayor and Town Council, the retirement will be effective in February 2019 giving them time to recruit and hire a new manager. By that time, I will be well past



retirement age and ready to slow the pace as well as to do some travelling with my wife, Mary.

It has been an honor to serve

the Town! The residents here are very supportive of the work done by the Town staff, the elected officials are excellent leaders to work for, and the volunteers on the various committees are committed to the Town as well as to their assignments. And, of course, the Town is beautiful; what a wonderful place to work! I will miss the people here and the opportunity to spend my days in such a picturesque environment!

State tax form reminder. Remember to write "Garrett Park" in the box labeled "City, Town or Taxing Area" when filling out your state income tax forms. If someone prepares your tax returns for you, be sure to remind them to put "Garrett Park" in that box. This ensures that our community receives its fair share of the income tax revenues the state distributes to the 23 counties and 157 incorporated cities and towns throughout Maryland. This revenue supports many of the services the town provides to residents.

Composting. The Town encourages composting of yard waste and other materials but reminds you

that food waste other than fruit and vegetable matter attracts rats and other vermin, creating an unhealthy



environment. We recently have had a rat-sighting at a compost location and request that you make sure

that only compostable material is being used. If you have questions about what is allowed in your compost area, please contact the Town office.

Town Website. It's a good idea to frequently check the Town website for up to date notices and information about our government, committees, and services. We also suggest you look at the online Town calendar and encourage you to sign up for the Resident's Portal: http://www.garrettparkmd.gov/res idents-portal.

The portal provides email information about town activities and events tailored to your interests, allows you to make online reservations for the Town Hall, and gives you access to the Town Directory. We always welcome your feedback on the site.

Gene Swearingen, Town Manager

Yoga for All Levels

Tuesdays, 6:15-7:30 pm, 8-9 pm Garrett Park Town Hall

Classes include stretching, alignment, restorative and breathing work, meditation, and relaxation.

"Tuesday night's class showed me how out of shape my core is!
Thank you for bringing your experience and knowledge into the
practice... not only is my mind refreshed, but my body says thank
you for the stretching and awareness"

Questions? Email Liz at gayatrimantra.liz@gmail.com Visit lilylotusyoga.com

Citizens Association Notes

On a chilly January 27th, the Citizens Association

held the venerable highlight of the Garrett Park winter social scene, the Town Dinner, attended by some 65 town residents. As usual, participants enjoyed a wide array of delicious pot luck food, and copious amounts of BYOB libations. The theme for the evening was "Nice to Meet You." This elicited quite a variety of stories after dinner, some sentimental, some poignant, some hilarious. A few dealt with meeting future spouses, ranging from innocent teenagers (Ed and Meme Lincoln) meeting 52 years ago the day before the start of senior year in high school, to one pair who met while both were married to someone else (but did not date until later when both were once again single—whew!). Several concerned meeting other Garrett Parkers, sometimes prior to moving to town (Citizen's Association President Darshini related meeting Todd Harris, which eventually led to buying a house in town). And the most hilarious of the evening was Carol Davies' tale playing in a golf tournament and standing aside as President Trump played through and nodded to her. The dinner itself was a "nice to meet you" occasion, a chance to chat with old friends and meet new ones.

Save the date. Candidates Forum (Wed, Apr 25). This is an opportunity to participate in an open Q&A forum with candidates for town government. Up for town election are two Council seats (currently held by Hans Wegner and Jane McClintock) as well as the position of Mayor (currently held Peter Benjamin). See http://www.garrettparkmd.gov/ for more information.

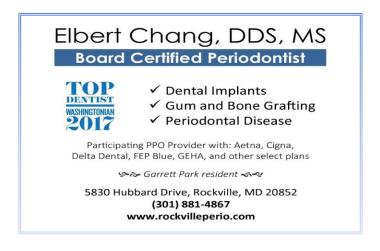
Future Meetings. Do you have a suggestion or idea for a meeting topic that you feel would be of interest to the town? If so, please forward your thoughts to Sean Conlan (sconlan@gmail.com) or Darshini Trivedi (darshinibtrivedi@gmail.com), or send a note to Box 456.

Annual Dues. The Citizens Association 2018 annual dues are being collected. The annual dues are \$15 for individuals and \$25 per family. Thank you to all of those who have already paid. For those who have not, please submit dues by mailing them to the Citizens Association at Box 456.

Garrett Park Listserv. Our neighborhood is made up of people with a wide variety of backgrounds, skills, perspectives, and experiences. Tap into these resources and stay informed with the Garrett Park neighborhood listserv. The listserv is an electronic forum for neighbors to communicate information about town concerns, safety issues, upcoming events, and recommended services (for

example, contractors, lawn care, doctors, and baby sitters). The listserv will not be used for unsolicited marketing, and you can unsubscribe at any time. To join, e-mail Todd Harris or sign in at https://groups.yahoo.com/group/GarrettParkneighbors/join.

Questions or comments for the Citizens Association? If so, please send a note to Box 456 or e-mail Darshini Trivedi (darshinibtrived@gmail.com) or Sean Conlan (sconlan@gmail.com).



Green Banner Contribution

Help Us Stay Green!



If anyone would like to support the Green Banner in future months, please make out a check to the Citizens Association (CA) for \$45 with "Green Banner" in the subject line; and mail it to the CA at Box 456. If you would like to dedicate your sponsorship to someone or something, please also include a note to that effect. Thank you.





Creative Contributions By Town Residents

This Old House→Where We Live

[Editor's note: This series is being done in coordination with members of the Archives and Historic Preservation Committees. For now, the monthly series will feature a house from within the Historic District with research from the Archives and interviews with current and/or past owners. The goal is to trace the history of these houses and highlight some of the interesting events that happened in the homes or to the people who have lived in them. Later, the series will showcase houses beyond the Historic District. Afterall, the Town is known for not only its unique history and park-like setting but also its eclectic mix of homes and the eccentrics who lived in them! That's what Garrett Park is all about! [2]

The home of Ken and Jane Salomon at 4716 Waverly Avenue is one of Garrett Park's grand old Victorians. Built in 1892, it has two sister houses, both found in the north side of Town. One at 11210 Kenilworth Avenue (Marian Green described this house in last month's Bugle); and its sister at 10909 Kenilworth. For those who identify Garrett Park houses by family name, you may also remember the Renshawe family who had the longest tenure in the Waverly house from 1910 to1957.

Originally the Waverly house was the home of General Ira C. Abbot. However, in 1896 he rented the house to Herman Hollerith, the man considered to be the father of IBM and the punch card. During WWII, the house was used as a meeting hall by the area's Civil Defense Committee. A trap door was installed in the roof to serve as a look-out for enemy aircraft!

The Salomon's, who have lived in the house since 1996, have restored the exterior close to its original appearance with the exception of the house's windmill. Unfortunately, many of Garrett Park's original windmills were destroyed during the hurricane of 1896.

-Contributed by Jane Salomon, Archives Committee ~ * ~ * ~ *

What We're Reading...

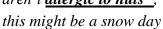
[Editor's note: The monthly series of book recommendations collected by Brian Mizoguchi will resume next month.]

In the meantime, if you have any books you'd like to recommend, please send in your thoughts for the next edition of "What We're Reading" to Brian Mizoguchi, GPBugle@googlegroups.com.

~ * ~ * ~ *

What We're Cooking...

[Editor's note: Nikki says, "If your children aren't allergic to nuts*,



activity. This vegan recipe is from Vegetarian Times: https://www.vegetarian times.com/recipes/the-heart-healthiest-chocolate-chip-cookies-in-the-world. We cheat on the vegan part and use normal chocolate chips!"]

Heart Healthiest Chocolate Chip Cookies*

Ingredients & Materials

- 3 Tbs. canola oil
- 2 cups walnuts*
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 11/2 cups oat flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 cups rolled oats
- 3 3.5-oz. bars bittersweet vegan chocolate, chopped, or 12 oz semi-sweet chocolate chips if you don't mind it not being vegan

Directions

- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat 2 baking sheets with cooking spray, or line with parchment paper.
- 2. Blend walnuts in food processor 30 seconds, or until ground into a fine meal. Add canola oil, and blend 2 to 3 minutes more, or until mixture has the consistency of natural peanut butter, scraping down sides of food processor occasionally. Transfer to bowl.
- 3. Whisk together brown sugar and ½ cup water in small saucepan, and bring mixture to a boil. Pour brown sugar mixture over ground walnut butter, add vanilla extract, and stir until no lumps remain.
- 4. Whisk together oat flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon in separate bowl. Stir oat flour mixture into walnut mixture. Cool 10 minutes. Fold in oats, then chocolate chips.
- 5. Shape cookie dough into 2-inch balls, and place 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Flatten cookies with bottom of drinking glass dipped in water. Bake 8 to 10 minutes, or until cookies begin to brown and tops look dry. Cool 3 minutes on baking sheets, then transfer to wire rack to cool completely.

Letters to the Editor

From: John Tschirky

Re: February Bugle, This Old Tree - Yes, Keep it!!

I am one of the residents on Clermont Avenue that met at the Town Council meeting on January 8 for 90 minutes to advocate for protecting a mature and stately tulip poplar tree that I have lived close to for 30 years. The Bugle report of the Council meeting captured the mood of the meeting and the passions exhibited by the neighbors who live under the canopy of this historic tree, but it was inaccurate on a few important points that I want to clarify.

The Bugle's report leaves the impression that we, the residents living in closest proximity to this tree, are new-comers to this discussion. In fact, as the new sidewalk is proposed to run directly across our front yards we have been engaged since the project was first proposed (from 30% to 99+% design) and have advocated for the tulip poplar for years. In fact, in a recent email from the Town Manager, we were assured that the tree would be "monitored," rather than destroyed by Pepco, as the Mayor had arranged.

Unfortunately, our repeated pleas have never been met with much more than a nod and a shrug from the Mayor and a key member of the Town Council, who, together, have taken on the sidewalk project with fairly limited participation from the rest of the Council, we learned on the 8th. We were relieved when the plans for the new sidewalk were originally promoted to Garrett Park residents and the State of Maryland as being innovative in nature and designed to protect existing trees and the streetscape in general and to enhance, not detract from, the beauty of our town. But as the sidewalk design nears completion and the acquisition of the needed additional funding is advancing, we realize that the Town still plans to destroy this largest tree on Clermont Avenue largely because it is an inconvenience to the current construction plan being put forward by the engineering firm hired by the Town.

Our collective decision to request time at a Town Council meeting came about because despite letters and meetings with the Mayor, Town Manager, Town Council members and the GP Arboretum Committee over the period of at least 18 months, we felt strongly that we needed a forum where we could all be in one room to speak to the issue. Past discussions had proven fruitless.

The Bugle report intimated that we, the neighbors, are not willing to accept facts about this tree. To the contrary. We are reasonable and well-informed people who disagree with the Mayor's position. Despite the Mayor's dismissive statements

about the importance of this tree and his facile assertion that it is impossible to repair the sidewalks on Clermont without removing this tree, we had yet to see any of the supporting documentation from certified arborists and engineers that The Mayor has claimed formed the foundation for his decision and have existed for months or years. It turns out that they don't exist. One important achievement from this meeting is that the Town requested assessments of the tree to be made by arbortists later in January 2018.

So, yes, we do question the professed immediate need to remove this grand tree that shades our street and homes and provides habitat to wildlife and sylvan ambiance to our street. We hold this tree in high regard and want this Town (which purports to esteem its trees) to expend the energy and employ the innovative thinking to seek ways to incorporate it into the new sidewalk, as other large willow oaks on Clermont Avenue are being incorporated.

Certified arborists who we have retained have examined this tree and are encouraging us in this challenge. They see the task of repairing the sidewalk around this great tree as manageable and offer examples with creative design and modern materials that provide compatibility between smooth, safe walking surfaces and large tree roots.

What is currently lacking is an open-minded team approach of civil engineers working with certified arborists (that have the required experience) to create a design worthy of this stately tree and our community of Garrett Park, which loves it trees.

Cutting this tree down for the sake of a smooth and easy pour of concrete is the cheap, quick and uninspired way to approach this challenge. It is unworthy of us.

Signed: John Tschirky with support of Suzi Gifford, Bob Gifford, Jill Stevens, Terrence Sauvain, Veronica Sauvain, Matt Pasquinelli and Tammy Pasquinelli

From: Suzi Gifford Re: February Bugle, This Old Tree Saving an Old Friend ...

Some people view the stately Tulip Poplar between 10914 and 10916 Clermont Avenue as an annoying impediment to a new sidewalk, but the residents of Clermont Avenue see it as an important feature of the history of Garrett Park, a town that proudly claims to be an arboretum, boasting a green

canopy of mature shade trees. First, it is important to note that we agree with the idea that a sidewalk is important for the safety of our children, elderly and handicapped, and we have no desire to protest the sidewalk project. We are simply asking that more research be done to find a way to repair this very short stretch of sidewalk in harmony with this healthy tree that has lived in Garrett Park longer than any of us.

On this note, I believe it is important for the town to relay accurate information to our residents. In response to the article in last month's Bugle, I'd like to make a few corrections. There was no documentation from engineers, arborists, or the Arboretum Committee that this tree is "nearing the end of its life" or unhealthy in any way. The tree stands tall (nearly 100 feet!), its branches filled with lush leaves in the summer, and thousands of buds during the winter. It is a favorite dwelling for squirrels and many species of birds. This past week the town hired arborists to evaluate the tree, and the majority reported that the tree is healthy and poses no threat. The concern of the arborists we have spoken to is not the health of the tree as it stands, but that the sidewalk construction 'as currently described' will damage the roots of the tree and 'cause' it to become stressed. This is why we are asking for optional designs, based on experience, to avoid injuring this otherwise healthy tree.

Secondly, the article states that the engineers do not think alternative designs for the sidewalk are feasible. However, there were no written statements of any sort from the engineers prior to this week offering alternative designs. The engineers have stated verbally that a root bridge is not appropriate for this tree, but until recently, were not asked to research other options. Arborists we have spoken with tell us that there are many options we can look at, citing examples in Takoma Park, Brookside Gardens, and Potomac. We understand that our mayor is anxious to begin construction of the new sidewalk, but we feel these options should be considered before we destroy the older trees that lend so much appeal to our town. Two more trees were removed from our street this week.

Third, the article states that the tree was originally tagged for removal a couple of years ago and therefore is not "new news"; insinuating that the Clermont Avenue residents had ample time to protest before now. Actually, we did protest the removal of the tree in May 2016, and were assured by email (of which I have a copy), that the tree would not be removed, and instead would continue to be monitored. It was through word of mouth that we learned the tree was indeed slated to be destroyed, and we stepped back up to the plate.



Finally, the conclusions about the tree's current and future health were not relayed to us by the Town Council, as stated in the Bugle article, but were statements made by the Mayor who, when questioned by a member of his own Council, admitted that no written documents to support his claims were available. It was that Town Council member who requested written evaluations by the arborists and engineers, and another Town Council member who stated that more research was necessary before considering destruction of this tree.

There has been confusion and misinformation regarding the health and fate of this tree, as well as others on our street, and therefore, there exists an understandable and unfortunate lack of trust. However, the Mayor and Town Council have agreed to meet with us again after the evaluations are completed, and we are anxious to work with the town administrators, the arborists, and the engineers, to find an alternative to destroying this beautiful tree for the sake of a 10-foot section of new sidewalk.

Perhaps the solution is as simple as gently repairing the short section of sidewalk beside the tree, and merging it with new sidewalk construction on the far side of the adjoining driveways. This would be a simple and economical compromise, confirming our support of the sidewalk project while protecting this beautiful tree.

Terry Sauvain, who has lived with the Tulip Poplar at the bottom of his driveway for at least 40 years, and whose wife Veronica (a former Garrett Park Postmaster) tends the flowers at its base, has offered financial support to save the tree, and said last week that losing this magnificent tree would be "like losing a dear, old friend."

Letter from the Mayor

Our Town Manager, Gene Swearingen, has announced his desire to retire near the end of this year. We are grateful that he has given this very early notice so that we have time to recruit his replacement. But there is no way to replace Gene. On the day he arrived to take on the Town Manager job, he was already expressing his love for and admiration of this town. He has demonstrated that feeling in his caring attitude when dealing with town residents, always trying to find ways to accommodate their desires and respond positively to their requests. His friendly demeanor and hard-working ethic have made him a superior Town Manager upon whom all of us have depended. He has also created an excellent relationship with our dedicated town staff. I have worked very closely with Gene and have valued our collegial sharing of the load and our deepening friendship. He will be missed by the whole town.

Gene and I have been working on the proposed FY 2019 budget for the town, which has just been introduced by the Council. As an ordinance, it must be voted on twice by the Council - once to introduce it and at a successive meeting to adopt it. In my last Bugle letter I described how the implications of the new tax act and changing economy made prediction of the town's revenues difficult. Another factor we needed to consider was what effect the tax act would have on the residents of Garrett Park. From the limited information we had available we concluded that there was a reasonable chance that many residents in town would experience a 2018 tax increase as a result of the new legislation. It seemed as though we ought to do something to at least partially mitigate that tax burden, rather than add to it. We are in the first year of a phase-in of a higher state assessment of our homes for property tax purposes, meaning that the Town would benefit from increased property tax revenues. The property tax is the only town-wide tax rate that the Town can control. We explored whether the Town could accommodate a decrease in that tax and decided that for at least a year or two, as the implications of the tax act became clearer, we could do so. Thus we proposed a reduction from 21¢ to 20¢ per \$100 valuation, or 5%. The Council voted to include this in the budget they introduced.

We have posted the 95% proposed sidewalk plans, with much detail on such matters as stormwater management and tree protection, on our website. Comments will be accepted until Monday,

February 26 to the Mayor or any council member, to the mayorandtowncouncil@garrettparkmd.gov email address, to the Town Forum on our website, or you may call Town Manager Gene Swearingen at 301-933-7488.

Finally, I make a plea that I repeat periodically. Your elected Town officials are volunteers who have agreed to take on substantial challenges and make difficult choices to help govern our town. They receive no remuneration. They do this not for personal benefit but because they care about our town and want it to retain its unique character and to continue to be a special community for us and for those who will live here in the future. For that they deserve our thanks and our respect.

Peter Benjamin

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Fast, professional repairs & hardware upgrades. At home tutorials. Your computer likely as good as new, or better in most cases.

\$50/hr flat rate.

Free pick-up and return.

Virus removal; memory upgrades; restore speed; computer to smartphone assistance; printer help; custom computer builds for gaming or other needs. Can't start your computer? Blue screen at startup? Computer slow? Programs, devices, or features don't work? Need wireless capabilities? Call or email me to arrive at a solution.

"Serving Garrett Park since 2010"



Garrett Park Elementary School PTA invites you to Family BINGO and Game Night with a Silent Auction



Saturday February 24th, 6-9 pm at GPES Family BINGO & Game Night with Silent Auction

GPES Alumni <mark>and</mark> neighbors, join this great event <mark>and</mark> support your local school!

Auction Item Highlight

4 One-Day Park Hopper Tickets Enjoy same-day admission to all Disney Theme Parks - Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney's Animal Kingdom, and Disney's Hollywood Studios

\$648 Fair Market Value
\$150 Opening Bid

Winter game night: Completely FREE board games, card games, BINGO, and recess games with KAH. Fun for kids!

Silent Auction: Guilt-free shopping to benefit the Rocky Fund. Fun for adults!

Potomac Pizza and dessert available for purchase.

Check out the full <u>catalog</u> of auction items for all the details.

This is our final major Rocky Fund fundraiser for the year!

http://www.gpespta.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/2018_Catalog.10140325.pdf